



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## Center for Middle Eastern Studies

### **Reading for Meaning (for students)**

What is a “text”?

Traditionally, a “text” is assumed to be a publication such as a book or a periodical.

But, a “text” in its broadest understanding is anything that can be read for meaning. Thus, a movie, for example, is a “text” when it sparks critical conversations about its intention and meaning. In fact, based on this very broad definition of “text” anything that is “read” for meaning can be considered a “text”. It is this broad meaning of “text” that we will keep in mind as we explore texts over the next three class meetings.

In those class meetings, you and your group will offer close readings of texts in order to draw cross-cultural connections between those texts and your own personal experiences. You will be required to explore how others have used clothing to make statements and, in turn, brainstorm your own personal experiences with clothing or body performance.

The group explorations of these texts are intended to get you to not only explore a specific text and learn about that text, but to do this in order to draw on that example and better understand the narrative essay you are required to write. Hopefully, by studying examples of how others make statements with clothing or body performance, you gain a better understanding of cross-cultural connections while brainstorming potential topics for your own narrative essay.

The following are the three exercises that you will complete in this assignment sequence.

#### **I. Create a collaborative annotated bibliography.**

As a group, create one annotated bibliography that documents the text(s) the group has explored and provides a list of research artifacts that helps contextualize the meaning of the text(s). Each group member is responsible for offering three sources that help the group understand the significance of the text. Be sure to communicate with each other as you explore sources to ensure that the sources are not repetitive. Keep in mind the quality of sources you and your group members choose to read by considering their effectiveness and their credibility.

The goal with this research project is to develop a strong understanding and explanation of how the text(s) exemplifies the use of clothing to make a statement. Seek both the examples of the texts and research on the text(s) that answers “wh” questions about the text:

**Who** is the subject of the text?

**What** is the meaning of the text?

**When** was the text historically relevant?

**Where** did the text take place?

**Why** is the issue depicted important?

**How** does the text relate to you and your writing purpose? How is the text useful in your understanding of your own personal experiences? The narrative essay guidelines?

**The Annotated Bibliography is due on October 2, 2019.**

## **II. Create a presentation.**

After completing your research and the annotated bibliography, you and your group should create a presentation that includes the text(s) your group studied and explains the importance of the text(s). Here, share images or a video of your text(s) so that your peers know what you explored. Include your findings that answer the “wh” questions. Finally, provide a number of specific questions to your audience that require your audience to discuss how the content is relevant to your narrative essay expectations. Here are some examples that could get you thinking about the connection between your text and your narrative essay:

Like we saw with example X, do you remember a time when you treated your clothing the same way?

Do you remember a time when you wanted Y in the same way we saw with the specific example of X?

**Presentations are due on October 7, 2019.**

## **III. Make a connection to yourself and your narrative essay.**

Finally, write a one-page MLA-formatted explanation of how your group’s textual example (or any of the textual examples explored) relates to your narrative writing assignment. Provide a connection of how the text example uses clothing to make a statement. Then, discuss a potential time you remember using clothing or body performance to make a statement.

**This reflective essay is due on October 9, 2019.**

### **List of Texts to Explore**

Here is a list of the texts for group exploration. Your task is to dive in, research, explore, read, and understand the importance of the statements being made by each of the subjects in the texts.

Group A                      “My First Conk” by Malcolm X

Group B	Zoot Suit Riots of the 1940s
Group C	Alaa Salah photo; Democratic women in white at State of the Union
Group D	Ramy Youssef's "Why Do They Make Her Wear That?"
Group E	Denim Day; Meaning of Safety Pins